

A  
RELATION  
OF THE  
Fearfull Estate  
OF  
Francis Spira,  
In the year 1548.

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Compiled by Nat. Bacon Esq;.

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*The Back-slider in heart shall be filled  
with his own waies, Prov. 14. 14.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed by R. I. for A. K. to bee  
sold by William Thackeray, at the  
Black-spread Eagle and Sun  
in the Old Bayley. 1665.

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RELATION

OF THE

FEARFUL FUTURE

OF

FRANCIS SPIRITS

IN THE YEAR 1548.



Compiled by James Eldon

The English in Spain shall be killed  
in the year 1548.

LONDON

Printed by W. A. for N. A. to be  
sold by W. A. at the  
Black-Swan-Bag and Sun  
in the Old-Bay, 1548.



## A P R E F A C E.



Or truth of this History ensuing, besides circumstances of place, person, time, occasion, so exactly observed: I referre my self to the Relation of those Godly men, who in several Languages have manifested to the world the several passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not onely not credited, but also discredited, and slandered, by such as found them to bee a

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*A Preface.*

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Blur to the *Roman* Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby, but being acquitted by many Compurgators of several nations, and some of the *Romish Religion*, being all of them spectators of this Tragedy: it occasioned not only a further manifestation & confirmation of the truth, but also a large and more frequent confluence, to see that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the succeeding story: but more fully out of an Apologie written by *Vergerius* Bishop of *Justinople*, who was accused for dispersing the fame of his Example to the stain of Popery, in which Apologie to *N. Rottan*, suffragan of *Padua*, is shortly and plainly declared; what was said, what was done, and who were



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*A Preface.*

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were present. If that it be demanded, what moved mee to compile this Treatise: *Spira*, tell them that it should teach fear and reverence, and indeed among all thoe that come to see him, few or none returns unshaken. *Vergerius* in his first Epistle saith: I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly feare and tremble: and in his Apology saith, it is such a rare Example, as I would willingly go to the furthest parts of the world to hear or see the like. The Lady *Jane* to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into *Spira's* sinne) saith: Remember the lamentable estate of *Spira*. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a book published in our Mother tongue, concerning this Subject, but as far as I can

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*A Preface.*

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learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present treatise, and as I have heard, a Translation of onely one of the Tractates from whence I have gathered this present Discourse in part. Concerning my care and fidelitie in this businesse, it is such, as I may truely say without changing of colour, that there is not one sentence of all this Work attributed unto the person of *Spira*, but it hath its Warrant, either from the Epistles of *Vergerius* and *Gribauldus*, Professors of the Law in *Padua*, or from the discourses of *Henry Scringer* a *Scotish-man*, *Sigismund Gelons* a *Transilvanian*, and *Mart. Boeha* a Divine of *Basil*: neither have I taken any other

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*A Preface.*

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other liberty then as a relation  
to weave the fore-said Discourses  
one within another, so as those  
which under several Writers were  
before counted several, are now by  
my in-deavours reduced into one  
intire Historie, connexed by  
due succession of time and occasion,  
as punctually as could be aimed at  
by the circumstances noted in the  
Writings of those holy and learned men  
before named.

*N. B.*

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12 JY 62



To the { Author and } of this History.  
Reader }

Some scattered parcels of this Story lay  
In Foreign Papers; which had'st not found a way  
thus to Collect, had'st been Obvious prey,  
Never seen the day.

Reader, would'st see how sinning 'gainst the light,  
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night  
Of discontents. Come hither Reader then, look here,  
And learn light-quenching sins to fear.

Reader, would'st see the Comfort-breathing Spirit  
To grieve, what cureless grief it doth demerit?  
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all despair: A man  
All Hell, a Spirit all one wound; who can  
A wounded Spirit bear?

Reader, would'st see (what mayest thou never feel)  
Despairs, Racks, Tortures, whips of burning steel?  
Come hither then, look here,  
And learn light-quenching sins to fear.

Behold

Behold this man, this Furnace, in whose heart  
Sin hath created Hells. Oh! in each part

What flames appear?

His thoughts all stings, words swords, brimstone his  
His sighs flames, wishes curses, life a death: (breath,  
A thousand Deaths live in him, he not dead:  
A breathing Coarse, in living-scalding-Lead:  
And yet he lives our Monuments; to tell

How black are quenched lights,  
Quench't joys are double frights,  
Black daies are double nights;  
Heaven tasted, lost, a double Hell.

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so bee,  
Read this, that others read not thee.

Legas Historiam,  
Ne fias Historia.

M. N.

Extra-



**E**Xtraordinary Examples  
of Divine Justice, GOD  
never intended for a  
nine daies wonder; else would  
he, when he exemplified *Lot's*  
Wife, have turned her into a  
Statue of melting Snow, nor  
of lasting Salt; which stood,  
as *Iosephus* tells us, till his age,  
after the Destruction of *Ieru-*  
*salem*; and as some Travellers  
report, till at this day: *ut quod-*  
*dam hominibus præstaret condi-*  
*mentum, quo sapiant unde illud*  
*caveatur exemplum: August. de*  
*civit. Dei, lib. 16. cap. 30.* for  
a season against corruption, a  
preservative against Apostacy.  
This Tragedy, when fresh and  
new, was the conversion and  
confirmation of sundry Wor-  
thies:  
B

thies *Vergerius*, a daily Spectator thereof, forsaking a rich Bishoprick of *Justinopolis*, and tents of Antichrist, went to *Basil* and died a worthy Protestant: many Nations had eye-witnesses of their own Students, then in the University of *Padua* who Penned the story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived; our *English* ones were very defective, and now worn out of shops and hands; sundry Manuscripts of this abroad, imperfect; which moved mee to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman, (who faithfully translated it out of *Italian, French, and Dutch Letters*) with the *Latine* of *Caelius Secundus, Curio, Matthaeus Gribauldus*, professors of the Civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigismond Gelous a Transilvanian*;

Henri-



*Henricus Scotus*, all daily visitors of *Spira*, and finde it accord with them. Touching *Spira's* person, I finde most learned Writers do incline to the right and hopeful hand; moved by his sweet, humble and charitable speeches, some few desperate ones excepted, that fell from him in some little agonies which kept him fasting and watching about six months space, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The summ of *Calvin's* and *Borrhaus* their counsels\* is, (\* who  
that all learn to take heed of <sup>write</sup>  
backsliding, which Gods soul <sup>largely of</sup>  
abhors, and not to dally with <sup>the use of</sup>  
Conscience, and Hell on earth, <sup>this pattern.</sup>)  
if justly incensed; more to be feared than the *Spanish* Inquisition, or all the Strapadoes and torments in the World :

and to take heed of *Spira's*  
principal errors : which were,  
to dispute with Satan over-  
busily in time of weaknesse,  
especially to reason, and con-  
clude from present sense, to  
Gods past Reprobation, and  
future Damnation: both which  
is hard, if possible, for any man  
to determine in his own, much  
more in others cases : so com-  
mending thee to his grace, who  
is able to establish thee to the  
end : I bid thee farewell, and  
hope well, while the space  
of Grace lasteth: *Dum Spiras*  
*spera*; so mayest thou take  
good and no hurt, by the read-  
ing of this terrible Example.

12 JY 62



A

# RELATION

of the fearful e-

state of *Francis*

SPIRA.



IN the year 1548,  
when the glorious  
Sun of the Gospel  
was but newly ri-  
sen in *Europe*; in  
the days of the raign of *Edward*  
the Sixth of that name, King  
of ENGLAND. In the  
Territorie, and under the  
Jurisdiction of the City of  
*Venice*, being the very border  
of *Italy*, in the Town of *Citta-*

B 3 *della,*

della, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning, and eloquence, of great experience, of carriage circumspect, and severe, his speech grave and composed; his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority, wherunto he was advanced, endow'd with outward blessings, of wife, and eleven children, and wealth in abundance: what his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion, than of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

I was (saith hee) excessively covetous of money, and accordingly I applyed my self to get by injustice, corrupting justice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude Justice: good Causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the Adversary perfideously: ill causes I maintained with all my might: I wittingly opposed the known truth, and the trust committed unto mee, I either betrayed or perverted. Thus having worn out forty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new, or rather newly revived Opinions of Luther, coming into those parts, represented an object of novelty unto him; who being as desirous to know, as hee was famous for knowledge, suffered not these wandring opinions to

pass unexamined ; but searching into the Scriptures, and into all Books of Controversie that he could get, both old and new ; and finding more than Fame or Opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertains, loves, and owns them at length ; and with such zeal, as hee became a professor, yea a teacher of them ; first to his Wife, Children, and Family ; and after to his Friends, and familiar acquaintance, and in comparison, seem'd to neglect all other affairs ; intending ever to presse this main point, that *We must wholly, and onely depend on the free and unchangeable love of G O D in the death of Christ, as the onely sure way to salvation* : and this was the summ of all his discourse : and this continued for the space of

of six years, or thereabouts ;  
even so long as this fire could  
keep it self within private  
walls, but at length it brake  
forth into publick meetings,  
so as the whole Province of  
*Padua* dawned by the Lustre  
thereof. The Clergy finding  
the trade of their Pardons to  
decay, and their Purgatory to  
waxe cold, began to bestirre  
themselves, glosing their acti-  
ons, first, with calumnious  
asperisions upon the whole  
profession; then more plainly  
striking at *Spira* with grievous  
accusations. And to effect their  
purpose, some promise labour,  
others favour, some advice, o-  
thers maintenance; all joyn  
to divide either his soul from  
his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Casa*, the  
Popes Legate, resident at *Ve-*

B. 5

nice,



*nice*, being by birth a *Florentine*, and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftinesse to effect his malicious purposes: to him these men repair with out-cries against *Spira*, that hee was the man that condemned the received Rites of the Church: deluded the Ecclesiastical power, and scandalized the polity thereof: one of no mean Rank: being a man of account and Authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech: and in one word a dangerous *Lutheran*: having also many Disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the *Legate* to cast his eyes on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the  
means



means of one only *Luther*, the *Romish* Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power: but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their Dignities: on the other side, when hee saw how propense the Common-people, inhabiting in the bordering Countrey of *Italy*, were to entertain those new opinions, hee now thought it no time to dispute, or perswade, but with speed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to send to *Spira*.

*Spira* by this time had considered with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such, as neither liked  
his

his person nor Religion; hee perceived that his opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and a change of polity, wherein at the best, hee could but expect a bloody victory; and that his Enemies wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to an account in publick: when hee must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former life, yea his own conscience the lye, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly Enemies; or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority: yea, his dear Countrey; and betake himself to a Forraign People, there to endure a thousand miseries, that doe continually waite upon a voluntary Exile.

Being

Being thus distracted and tossed in the restless Waves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or haven to fly to for succor; on the sudden, **G O D S** Spirit assisting, he felt a calm, and began to discourse with himself, in this manner:

*Why wandrest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of faith. Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodness, thy constancy? remember that Christs Glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear, & he will defend thee, he will tel thee what thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger, bring thee out of prison, raise thee from the dead; consider Peter in the dungeon, the Martyrs in the fire; if thou makest a good confession, thou maist indeed go to prison, or death, but an eternal reward in Heaven*  
remains

remains for thee: What hast thou in this world comparable to Eternal life, to everlasting happiness? if thou doest otherwise, think of the scandal; (common-people live by example, thinking whatever is done, is well done;) fear the loss of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternal wrath, or if thy flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, fly thy Country; get thee away, though never so far, rather than deny the Lord of life.

Now was *Spira* in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yeild to these weighty reasons: yet holding it wisdom to examine all things, hee consults also with flesh and blood; thus the Battel doth renew, and the Flesh begins in this manner: *Be well advised, fond man, consider Reasons on both sides*

sides, and then judge: how canst  
thou thus over-ween thine own  
sufficiency, as thou neither re-  
gardest the examples of thy Pro-  
genitors, nor the judgement of  
the whole Church: doest thou not  
consider, what misery this thy  
rashness will bring thee unto: thou  
shalt lose all thy substance, gotten  
with so great care and travel:  
thou shalt undergoe the most  
exquisite torments that malice it  
self can devise: thou shalt bee  
counted an Heretick of all, and  
to close up all, thou shalt dye  
shamefully. What thinkest thou  
of the loathsome stinking Dun-  
geon, the bloody Axe, the bur-  
ning Fagot: are they delightful?  
Bee wise at length, and keep thy  
life and honor: thou mayest live  
to do much good to good men, as  
God commands thee: thou mayest  
be an Ornament to thy Countrey;  
and

and put case, the Countries losse would bee of small esteem with thee; Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? thou hast begotten children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and inhumanely butcher them, which may in time bring honour to their Countrey, glory to God, help and furtherance to his Church? go to the Legate, weak man, freely confess thy fault, and help all these miseries. Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choak the good Seed that was formerly Sowne: so as fearing hee faints, and yeilds unto the allurements of this present world, and being thus blinded, he goes to the Legat at Venice, and salutes him with this news.

*Having for these divers  
years.*

years entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of Faith, contrary to the Orthodox, and received Judgement of the Church, and uttered many things against the Authority of the Church of Rome, and the universal Bishop: I humbly acknowledge my fault and Errour, and my folly in mis-leading others: I therefore yeild my self in all obedience to the Supream Bishop, into the bosom of the Church of Rome; never to depart again from the Traditions and Decrees of the holy See: I am heartily sorry for what is past; and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legate perceiving Spira to faint, hee pursues him to the utmost; hee causes a recitation of all his errors to be drawn in writing, together with

with the Confession annexed to it, and commands *Spira* to subscribe his name thereto, which accordingly hee did, then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town : and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* to bee holy, and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther*, and other such Teachers, as false, and Heretical; *Man knows the beginning of sinne, but who bounds the issues thereof ? Spira* having once lost footing, goes down amaine, hee cannot stay nor gain-say the *Legate* : but promiseth to accomplish his whole will, and pleasure : hee soon addresseth himself for his Journey : and being onward in the way, he thinks



thinks himself of the large  
spoils hee had brought away,  
from the Conflict with the  
*Legate* : what glorious testi-  
mony hee had given of his  
great Faith, and constancy in  
Christ's cause, and to bee  
plain, how impiously hee had  
denied Christ and his Gospel  
at *Venice* : and what hee pro-  
mised to do further in his own  
Country : and thus partly  
with fear, and partly with  
shame, being confounded. He  
thought hee heard a voice  
speaking unto him, in this man-  
ner :

*Spira, What dost thou here ?  
whither goest thou ? hast thou,  
unhappy man, given thine hand  
writing to the Legate at Venice ?  
yet see thou dost not seal it in  
thy own Country. Dost thou  
indeed think Eternal life so  
mean,*

mean, as that thou preferrest this present life before it? dost thou well in preferring Wife and Children before Christ? is the windy applause of the people, better indeed than the glory of God; and the possession of this Worlds good more dear to thee, than the salvation of thine own soul? is the small use of a moment of time more desirable, than eternal wrath is dreadful? Think with thy self, what Christ endured for thy sake? is it not equall, thou shouldest suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present life, are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed: If thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also reign with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; neverthelesse, the gate of mercy is not quite shut: take heed that

rest that thou heapest not sin upon sin,  
lest thou repent when it will bee  
too late.

Now was *Spira* in a Wil-  
derneffe of doubt, not know-  
ing which way to turn him,  
nor what to do: yet being arri-  
ved in his own Countrey, and  
amongst his Friends, with  
shame enough he relates what  
he had done, and what he had  
further promised to do; and  
how the terror of God on the  
one side, and the terror of this  
world on the other side, did  
continually rack him; and  
therefore he desired of them  
advice in this so doubtful a  
case: His friends upon small  
deliberation answered: that it  
was requisite hee should take  
heed that hee did not in any  
wise betray his wife and chil-  
dren, and all his friends into  
danger,

danger, seeing that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might bee done in lesse space than half an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him: adding moreover, that hee could get no credit in relenting from that which hee had already in greatest part performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise more than what by the former action already hee had sustained: on the other side, if hee did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, hee could neither discharge himselfe of the shame which hee had already incurred; nor avoid farre more

more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably hee should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the Battel: and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the *Prator*, and proffers to perform his promise made unto the *Legate*, who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira*, to the *Prator*, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wore out with restless cares, without any minute of rest, the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Masse being finished, in the pre-

presence of Friends and Enemies, and of the whole Assembly; being by estimation near two thousand people; yea, and of Heaven it self, hee recites that infamous abjuration: word for word, as it was written: It being done, hee was fined at thirty pieces of Gold, which hee presently paid, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration: the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a *Shryne* to put the *Encharist* in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, goods, wife, and children; No sooner was hee departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice saying to him: *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me; thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy obedience, thou hast*  
bre-

*broken thy vow, hence Apostate,*  
*bear with thee the sentence of thy*  
*eternal damnation:* He trembling and quaking in body and minde, fell down in a swoound; relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward, he never found any peace or ease of minde; but continuing in uncessent torments, he professed that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great God: that hee heard continually that fearful Sentence of Christ that just Judge; that hee knew hee was utterly undone; that hee could neither hope for grace, nor Christs intercession with God the Father in his behalf: thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his Judgement before his eyes.

Now began his Friends  
**C** some

some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsell: others not looking so high as the Judgement of God, laid all the blame upon his melancholick constitution; that overshadowing his judgement, wrought in him a kind of madness: every one censured as his fancy lead him, yet for remedy all agreed in this: to use both the wholesome helpe of Physitians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to bee had: this they accordingly did, both with his Wife, Children, and whole Family: others also of his Friends, accompanying him; and being arrived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in Saint



Saint *Leonards* Parish, they sent for three Physitians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptomes of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their Verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper Originally from it self, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this malady of his did arise from some grief, or passion of his minde, which being over-burthened, did so oppress the spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full: and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy:

C 2 shadow-

shadowed the seat of the Judgment and so corrupted it: this was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature; this they endeavoured to reform by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those humours from the brain; but all their skill effected nothing, which Spiras noting, said: *Alas poor men! how farre wide are you? do ye think that this disease is to be cured by potions? believe me, there must be another manner of medicine, it is neither plaisters, nor drugs, that can help a fainting soul, cast down with sense of sin, and the wrath of God; 'tis onely Christ that must bee the Physitian, and the Gospell the soul Antidote.*

*The Physitians easily be-  
lieved*

believed him, after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country: partly for that hee was a man of Esteem: partly because as the Disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable: for this was not done in a corner: so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity onely to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; or at least to benefit themselves, by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of

*Justinopolis*, and *Matthews Gribaudus*, deserve especially to be named, as the most principal labourers for this mans comfort. They finde him now about fifty years of Age, neither affected with the dotage of old age; nor with the unconstant head-strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgement: in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink: yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously opposite: his Friends laboured him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which hee obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which hee spit out again:

gain exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said; *As it is true that all things work for the best to those that love God, so to the wicked, all are contrary: for whereas a plentiful off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate of their aged Parents, to me they are a cause of bitterness and vexation: they do strive to make me tire out this misery, I would fain be at an end, I deserve not this dealing at their hands: O! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary soul.* Rom. 8. 28.

His friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease: forth-with he brake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and

that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of Gods promises recorded in the Scriptures, and many Examples of Gods mercy: *My sin* (said he) *is greater than the mercy of God.* Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved: *It is true* (quoth hee) *hee would have all that hee hath Elected to bee saved; hee would not have damned Reprobates to bee saved; I am one of that number, I know it, for I willingly, and against my knowledge denied Christ, and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.*

After some silence, one asked him whether hee did not believe

believe that Doctrine to bee true, for which hee was accused before the *Legate*? he answered; *I did believe it, when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church; I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope; I am a Reprobate like Cain, or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends do me great wrong that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve.*

Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God; to which he answered: 'The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the Elect: but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up

*Rom. 2. 15.*

'to wrath: I tel you I deserve it,  
 ' my own conscience condemns  
 ' me; what needeth any other  
 ' Judge? Christ came (said they)  
 to take away sin, & calling for a  
 book, they read unto him the  
 Passion of Christ; and com-  
 ing to his nailing to the Cross,  
*Spira* said: ' This indeed is  
 ' comfortable to such as are E-  
 ' lected, but as for me wretch,  
 ' they are nothing but grief and  
 ' torment, because I contemned  
 ' them. Thus roaring for grief,  
 and tossing himsele up and  
 down upon the bed as hee lay,  
 he entreated them to read no  
 more: As *Gribauidus* was com-  
 ing to see him, *Vergerius* said  
 to *Spira*: Dear Sir, here is  
 Doctor *Gribauidus*, a godly and  
 faithful friend of yours, come  
 to see you: ' Hee is welcome  
 ' (said he) But hee shall find

' me



'me ill: *Gribauldus* replied,  
Sir, this is but an illusion of  
the Devil, who doth what hee  
can to vex you, but turn you  
to God with your whole  
heart, and he is ready to shew  
you mercy; the Lord you  
know is full of mercy, it is  
he that hath said, that as *often*  
*as a sinner repents of his sin, hee*  
*will remember his sins no more.*  
Consider this in the Example  
of *Peter* that was Christs fami-  
liar, and an Apostle; and yet  
denied him thrice with an  
Oath, and yet God was mer-  
ciful unto him: Consider  
the thief that spent his whole  
life in wickedness; and for all  
that, did not God graciously  
respect him in the last minute  
of his life? Is the Lords hand  
now shortned, that it cannot  
save? to this *Spira* answered;  
If

Luk. 22. 61

*If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful eye, and in that he was pardoned, it was not because hee wept; but because God was gracious to him; but God respects not me, and therefore I am a Reprobate; I feel no comfort can enter into my heart, there's place there but onely for torments and vexings of Spirit: I tell you my case is properly mine own: no man ever was in the likeplight, and therefore my estate is fearful.*

Then roaring out in the bitterness of his Spirit, said: *It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: the violence of his passion, and action suitable, did amaze many of the beholders; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voice, that he was possessed.*

possessed : hee over-hearing it,  
said : *Do you doubt it ? I have a  
whole Legion of Devils that take  
up their dwellings within me, and  
possess me as their own : and just-  
ly too , for I have denied Christ.*  
Whether did you that willing-  
ly or not ? (said they. ) *That's  
nothing to the purpose* (said Spi-  
ra : ) *Christ saith, Whosoever de-* Mat. 10.  
*nies mee before men , him will I* <sup>33.</sup>  
*deny before my Father which is in  
Heaven : Christ will not be deni-  
ed , no not in word ; and there-  
fore it is enough, though in heart  
I never denied him.*

They observing his distem-  
per to arise from the sense and  
horror of the pains of Hell,  
asked him whether he thought  
there were worse pains than  
what hee endured for the pre-  
sent ; hee said, that he knew  
*there were far worse pains than  
those*

Psal 1.

' those that hee then suffered :  
 ' for the wicked shall rise to  
 ' their judgment, but they shall  
 ' not stand in judgment : this I  
 ' tremble to thinke of : yet do  
 ' I desire nothing more than  
 ' that I might come to that  
 ' place where I may be sure to  
 ' feel the worst, and to be freed  
 ' from fear of worse to come.

I but you are to consider (said  
 one) that those opinions for  
 which you were accused before  
 the *Legate*, were impious ; and  
 therefore you are not to think  
 you denied Christ, but rather  
 that you confessed him, ac-  
 knowledging the infallible  
 truth of the Catholick Church.  
 ' Truly (said he) when I did de-  
 ' ny those opinions, I did think  
 ' them to be true, and yet I did  
 ' deny them.

Go to (said others ; ) now  
 then

d: then believethat they are true,  
to ' Now I cannot(said he; ) God  
all ' will not suffer me to believe  
is ' them,nor trust in his mercy;  
do ' what would you have me do?  
an ' I would fain attain to this  
nat ' power, but cannot, though I  
to ' should presently be burnt for  
ed ' it. But why do you, said the o-  
e. ther, esteem this so grievous a  
rid sin, when as the learned *Legate*  
or constrained you to it, which he  
re surely would not have done,  
nd if your former Opinions had  
nk not been erronious: no, good  
er *Francis*, the Devil besets thee;  
c- let not therefore the grievous-  
le nesse of thy sinne, (if any such  
h. be) amaze thee. ' You say right  
e. ' (replyed he; ) the devil hath  
nk ' possessest me, and God hath left  
id ' me to his power; for I finde,  
w ' I can neither believe the Gos-  
n ' pel, nor trust in Gods mercy;

Rom. 9. 11.

Rom. 4.

Jam. 2. 13

Rom. 9. 18

I have sinned against the Holy Ghost; and God by his immutable decree, hath bound me over to perpetual punishment, without any hope of pardon. It is true, that the greatness of sin, or the multitude of them, cannot binde Gods Mercy: all those many sins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not so much trouble me, for I trusted that God would not lay them to my charge: But now having sinned against the Holy Ghost, God hath taken away from me all power of Repentance; and now brings all my sins to remembrance; and thus guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore it is no matter whether my sins be great or small, few or many; they are such, as Christs blood, nor Gods mercy belongs to me: God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom

whom he will he hardneth; this is it that gnaws my heart, he hath hardned me; and I finde that he daily more and more doth harden me, and therefore I am out of hope, I feel it, and therefore cannot but despair: I tell you, there was never such a monster as I am; never was any man alive a spectacle of so exceeding misery. I know that Justification is to be expected by Christ, and I denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adversity, and my children from poverty; and now behold how bitter this life is to mee, and God onely knows, what shall become of this my family; but surely no good is like to betide it, but rather daily worse and worse; and such a ruine at the length, as that one stone shall not be left on another.

But

But why should you (said Gri-  
bauldus ) conceit so deeply of  
your sin, seeing you cannot but  
know, that many have denyed  
Christ, yet never fell into de-  
spair?

*Well (said hee) I can see no  
ground of comfort for such, nei-  
ther can I warrant them from  
Gods revenging hand in wrath;  
though it pleaseth God to suffer  
such to be in peace: and besides,  
there will a time of danger  
come, and then they shall be tho-  
rowly tryed: and if it were not  
so, yet God is just in making me  
an example to others; & I cannot  
justly complain: there is no punish-  
ment so great, but I have deserved  
it, for this so hainous offence: I as-  
sure you it is no smal matter to de-  
ny Christ, & yet it is more ordina-  
ry than commonly men do con-  
ceive of: it is not a denyal made  
before*



before a Magistrate; as it is with mee: for as often as a Christian doth dissemble the known truth: as often as he approves of false Worship, by presenting himself at it, so often as hee doth not things worthy of his Calling, or such things as are unworthy of his Calling, so often hee denies Christ: Thus did I, and therefore am justly punished for it.

Your estate (qd. Gribauldus) is not so strange as, you make it. Job was so farre gone, that hee complained God had set him as a mark against him: and David that was a man after Gods own heart, complained often that God had forsaken him, and was become his enemy: yet both received comfort again: comfort your self therefore, God will come at length, though he

hee now seem farre off.

O Brother (answered Spira)  
I believe all this, the Devils believe and tremble; but David was ever elected and dearly beloved of God, and though hee fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit; and therefore was heard when he prayed, Lord take not thy holy Spirit from me: But I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God, neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled: and therefore I know I shall live in continual hardnesse so long as I live: O that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of hell within mee, and afflicts my conscience with pangs  
unutter-

*unutterable : verily desperation is  
hell it self.*

Here *Gribauldus* said, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that hee may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

*Nay ( said Spira ) hence do I know that I am a reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardness of heart : O that my bodie had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul, and ease my Conscience, this burthened Conscience.*

*Gribauldus* being desirous to ease his minde from the continual meditation of his sin; as also to sound, how for the present he stood affected to the *Romish Church* : asked him  
what

what he thought became of the souls of men so soon as they departed out of the body; to which he answered,

*Although this bee not so fully revealed in Scripture; yet I verily believe that the souls of the Elect go presently to the Kingdom of glory; and not that they sleep with the body, as some do imagine.*

Very well, said one of the Spectators, why do the Scriptures then say, that God brings  
1 Sam. 2. 9 down to hell, and raiseth up; seeing it cannot bee meant of the estate of the Soul after death, which as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption; it must bee understood of the estate of the soul in this life: like that wherein thou art at this present: and  
often-

oftentimes wee see that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again : and therefore despair not, but hope ; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

*This is the work (quoth Spira) this the labor : for I tell you when I at Venice did first abjure my profession, and so, as it were, drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me : and when at Cittadella, I did, as it were, set to my seal : the Spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write Spira, do not seal : yet I resisted the Holy Ghost, and did both ; and at that very present I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will ; so although I can say, I would believe, yet can I not say, I will believe. God hath denyed me the power of will :*

will : and it befalls mee in this my miserable estate , as with one that is fast in Irons , and his friends coming to see him , do pittie his estate , and do perswade him to shake off his fetters , and to come out of his bonds , which God knows hee would fain do , but cannot : this is my very case ; you perswade me to believe : how fain would I do it , but cannot : O now I cannot. Then violently grasping his hands together , and raising himself up : Behold ( said hee ) I am strong , yet by little and little I decay , and consume , and my servants would fain preserve this weary life : but at length the will of God must be done , and I shall perish miserably as I deserve : Rejoyce yee righteous in the Lord : blessed are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.

Then

Then after some pause; *It is wonderful, I earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is onely in Christ, yet I cannot set myself to lay hold on it, such are the punishments of the damned: they confess, what I confess, they repent of their losse of Heaven; they envy the Elect; yet their repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their waies.*

As he was thus speaking, he observed diverse flies that came about him, and some lighted on him: *Behold (said hee) now also \* Beelzebub comes to his banquet, you shall shortly see my end, and in me an example to many, of the Justice and Judgement of GOD.*

\* Signifies  
the God  
of Flies.

About this time came in  
two Bishops, with diverse  
D Schollars

Schollers of the University, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more than any other, being continually conversant with him: told him his estate was such, as rather stood in need of prayer than advice: and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords Prayer; *Spira* consented, and he began.

[*Our Father which art in Heaven,*] then breaking forth into tears he stopped; but they said, It is well, your grief is a good sign: *I bewail* (said hee) *my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God, and cannot call to him from my heart as I was wont to do; yet let us go on* said *Vergerius*.

*Thy Kingdom come:*] O Lord (said *Spira*) bring me also into this Kingdom: I beseech thee  
shut



shut me not out. Then coming to those words, [*Give us this day our daily bread:*] he added: 'O Lord I have enough & abundance to feed this carcass of mine: but there is another bread I humbly beg, the bread of thy grace: without which, I know I am but a dead man.

[*Lead us not into temptation:*] seeing Lord that I am brought into temptation, help me Lord that I may escape: the enemy hath overcome, help me, I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly: and expressing such affections and passion, as turned the bowels of those there present, with grief and compunction: they then turning to *Spira*, said: You

D a know

know that none can call *Christ Jesus the Lord*, but by the holy Ghost : you must therefore think of your self according to that soft affection, which you expresse in your prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

‘I perceive (saied *Spira*) that I  
 ‘cal on him to my eternal dam-  
 ‘nation: for I tell you again, it is  
*Psa. 109. 7.* ‘a new and unheard of exam-  
 ‘ple that you finde in me: If  
*Judas* (saied they) had but out-  
 lived his daies, which by nature  
 he might have done : he might  
 have repented, and Christ  
 would have received him to  
 mercy : and yet he sinned most  
 grievously against his Master,  
 which did so esteem of him, as  
 to honor him with the Dignity  
 of an Apostle, and did maintain  
 and

and feed him : Hee answered ,  
' Christ did also feed and ho-  
' nour me , neither yet is my  
' fault one jot less than that of  
' his ; because it is not more  
' honour to be personally pre-  
' sent with Christ in the flesh ,  
' than to be in his presence now  
' by illumination of his Holy  
' Spirit : and besides, I deny that  
' ever *Fndas* could have repen-  
' ted, how long soever hee had  
' lived ; for grace was quite ta-  
' ken from him , as it is now  
' from me.

O *Spira* (said they) you know  
you are in a Spiritual desertion,  
you must therefore not believe  
what Satan suggests ; hee was  
ever a Liar from the beginning,  
and a meer impostor, and will  
cast a thousand lying fancies  
into your mind, to beguile you  
withal ; you must rather be-

lieve those whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you than your self : believe us, and wee tell you that God will be merciful unto you.

‘ O here is the knot (saide *Spirita*) I would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled withal ; that he saw the Devils come flocking into his chamber, and about his bed terrifying him with strange noises, that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by : and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his minde, and a continual butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs

pangs of the damned wights  
in Hell.

Cast away these fancies (said  
*Gribauldus*) these are but il-  
lusions; humble your self in  
the presence of God, and praise  
him. 'The dead praise not  
'the Lord (answered hee) nor *Psal. 6. 5.*  
'they that go down into the  
'pit: we that are drowned in  
'despair are dead, and already  
'gone down into the pit: what  
'Hell can there bee worse than  
'desperation; or what great-  
'er punishment? the gnaw-  
'ing worm, unquenchable fire,  
'horror, confusion, and (which  
'is worse than all) desperation  
'it self continually tortures me,  
'and now I count my present  
'estate worse, than if my soul  
'(separated from my body)  
'were with *Judas* and the rest  
'of the damned, and therefore,

D 4

'now

‘now desire rather to be there,  
‘than thus to live in the body.

One being present, repeated  
certain words out of the *Psalms*:

**Psal. 89.30** If thy Children forsake my  
Law, and walk not in my judg-  
ments; I will visit their trans-  
gressions with rods, and their  
iniquity with stripes; never-  
thelesse my loving kindnesse I  
wil not utterly take from them,  
nor suffer my faithfulnessse to  
fail: mark this, O *Spira*, my Co-  
venant I will not break.

‘ These promises (said *Spira*)  
‘ belong onely to the Elect,  
‘ which if tempted, may fall in-  
‘ to sin, but are again lifted up,  
‘ and recovered out: as the  
**Prov. 24.16.** *Prophet* saith, though he fall,  
‘ hee shall not bee utterly cast  
‘ down, for the Lord uphold-  
‘ eth him; therefore *Peter* could  
‘ rise, for he was Elected, but  
‘ the

re, the reprobates when they fall  
 cannot rise again, as appears  
 in *Cain, Saul, and Judas*: God  
 deals one way with the Elect,  
 and another with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with  
 them in the Latine tongue, and  
 that with excellent affection, as  
 outwardly appeared. Blessed be  
 God (said *Vergerius*;) these are  
 not signs of eternal reprobati-  
 on: you must not, O *Spira*, seek  
 out the secret counsels of Gods  
 election and reprobation: for  
 no man can know, so long as  
 he lives, whether by his good  
 or bad deeds, he be worthy of  
 Gods love or anger: do you  
 not know that the Prophet *Da-  
 vid* complained that God had  
 cast off his soul.

*Ecc. 9. 12.*  
*Psa. 88. 14.*

*I know all this (quoth Spira) I  
 know the mercies of God are infi-  
 nite, and do surpass the sins of the*

whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impossible, as to drink up the Sea at a draught: As for that of Salomon, if hee had ever tried that which I feel by woful experience, he would never have spoken as he did: but the truth is, never had mortal man such an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred against him, as I have: you that are in a good estate, think repentance and faith to be a work of great facility: and therefore you think it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe: the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill: but this is the Hell to me, my heart is hardned, I cannot believe: many are called, but few are chosen.

Upon



Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self?

‘I once did know God to be my Father, not onely by creation, but by regeneration; I knew him by his beloved Son, the authour and finisher of our salvation: I could pray to him, and hope for pardon of sins from him: I had a taste of his sweetness, peace & comfort: now contrarily, I know God not as a Father, but as an enemy: what more? my heart hates God, and seeks to get above him: I have nothing else to fly to but terror and despair.

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of Gods Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

*The Judgements of God are a deep*

Psal. 26. 6. deep abyss (said he) wee are soon  
 Rom. 11. drowned if we enter into them; he  
 33. that thinks he standeth, let him  
 1 Cor. 10. take heed lest he fall: as for my  
 12. self, I know I am fallen back;  
 and that I once did know the  
 truth; though it may bee not so  
 thoroughly: I know not what else to  
 say, but that I am one of that  
 Pla. 50. 22 number which God hath threatned  
 to tear in picces.

Say not so (answered they)  
 for God may come though at  
 the last hour; keep hold there-  
 fore at the least by hope.

This (quoth hee) is my case,  
 I tell you I cannot, God hath de-  
 prived me of hope, this brings ter-  
 ror to my minde, and pines this  
 body which now is so weak, as it  
 cannot perform the several offices  
 thereof: for as the Eleēt have the  
 Spirit testifying that they are the  
 om. 8. 16. Sons of God, so the Reprobates, e-  
 ven

ven while they live, do often feel  
a worm in their conscience,  
whereby they are condemned al-  
ready; and therefore as I percei-  
ved this wound inflicted on my  
minde and will, I knew that I wan-  
ted the gifts of saving grace, and  
that I was utterly undone; God  
chastneth his Children with tem- 1 Cor. II.  
porary afflictions, that they may 33.  
come as Gold out of the fire, but Rom. 12.  
punisheth the wicked with blind- 28.  
nesse in their understandings, and Joh. 18.42  
hardness of heart, and woe bee to  
such, from whom God takes his  
Holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and  
told him, hee gave too much  
credit to sense, that he was not  
to believe himself, but rather  
him that was in a good estate;  
and I testifie to you (said hee)  
that God will be merciful to  
you.

Nay

Nay (answered he) for because I am in this ill estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort: but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity: a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do: It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labor, with all intention of heart and affection; with full desire and endeavour, continually to set forth Gods Glory: there must be neither fear of Legates, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever; many think themselves happy that are not: it is not every one that saith: Lord, Lord, that shall go to Heaven.

They

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if hee had been drowzie and very loath to discourse: at which time there came in also a grave man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not: hee lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembering him, the man said to him: *I am Presbyter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice*, some 8. weeks since:

‘O cursed day (said *Spira*)!  
‘O cursed day! O that I had  
‘never gone thither! would  
‘God I had then dyed.

Afterwards came in a Priest, called, *Bernardinus Sardinus*, bringing with him a Book of Exorcisms, to conjure this devil: whom when *Spira* saw, shaking his head, he said:

‘I am verily perswaded indeed  
‘that

‘ that God hath left me to the  
‘ power of the devil : but such  
‘ they are, as are not to bee  
‘ found in your Letany : nei-  
‘ ther will they be cast out by  
‘ spels. The Priest proceeding  
in his intended purpose; with a  
strange uncouth gesture, and a  
loud voice, adjured the spirit to  
come into *Spira*’s tongue, and to  
answer: *Spira* deriding his fruit-  
lesse labour, with a sigh turned  
from him: a Bishop being there  
present, said to *Spira*; brother,  
God hath put vertue into the  
Word and Sacraments: and we  
have used the one means, and  
finde not that effect, which we  
desire, shall we try the efficacy  
of the Sacrament? surely if you  
take it, as a true Christian  
ought to receive the body and  
blood of Christ, it will prove  
a soveraign medicine for your  
sick soul.

‘ This

' This I cannot do (answered  
' he; for they that have no  
' right to the promises, have no  
' right to the seals. *The Eucha-*  
*rist was appointed onely for Be-* I Cor. I.<sup>11</sup>  
*lievers: if we have not faith, we* <sup>33.</sup>  
*eat and drink Judgement to our*  
*selves: I received it about a month*  
*since, but I did not well in so do-*  
*ing; for I took it by constraint, and*  
*so I took it to my deeper condem-*  
*nation.*

Here *Vergerius* began to im-  
portune him earnestly to be-  
ware that he did not wilfully  
resist Grace, and put himself  
out of Heaven; charging him  
vehemently, by all the love  
that was between them: by the  
love which he bore to his Chil-  
dren, yea, to his own soul;  
that he would set himself seri-  
ously to return to that Faith  
and Hope, which once he had  
in.

in the death of Christ : with many such like words : *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly : and being somewhat moved , said : You do but repeat , *Vergerius* : what should I hope ? why should I believe ? God hath taken faith from me : shew me then whither I shall go , shew me a Haven whereto I shall retire. You tell mee of Gods mercy , when as God hath cast me off ; you tell me of Christs intercession , I have denyed him ; you command me to believe , I say I cannot : you bring me no comfort ; your command is as impossible for me to obey , as to keep the Moral Law : if you should perswade one to love God , with all his heart , soul and strength : and God gives him not the power , can he perform your desire ? Doth not the Church teach us to sing , *Direct*



with rect us O Lord to love thy Com-  
mandments : hypocrites say that  
they love God with al their heart,  
but they lye: for my part I will  
not lye, but tell you plainly; such  
is my case, that though you should  
never so much importune mee to  
hope or believe, though I desire it,  
yet I cannot: for God as a punish-  
ment of my wickedness, hath ta-  
ken away from me all his saving  
graces, faith, hope, and all: I am  
not the man therefore that you  
take me for: belike you think I de-  
light in this estate; If I could  
conceive but the least sparke of  
hope of a better estate hereafter,  
I would not refuse to endure the  
most heavy weight of the wrath  
of that great God; yea, for twenty  
thousand years, so that I might at  
length attain to the end of that  
misery, which I now know will  
bee eternal: But I tell you, my  
will

will is wounded : who longs more to believe than I do ? but all the ground-work of my hope is quite gone ; for if the testimonies of holy Scripture be true, (as they are most certainly true) is not this as true : whosoever denies me before men, him (saith Christ) will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven ? Is not this properly my case, as if it had purposely been intended against this very person of mine ? And I pray you, what shall become of such as Christ denieth ; seeing there is no other Name under Heaven, whereby you look to bee saved ? What saith Saint Paul to the Hebrews ? It is impossible for those who were once enlightned and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance : what can be more plain

leb. 6.

plain against mee? Is not that  
Scripture also; if wee sin wilful- Heb. 10. 26  
ly after wee have receive the  
knowledge of the truth, there re-  
maineth no more Sacrifice for sin,  
but a certain looking for of Judge-  
ment: the Scripture speaks of  
me, Saint Paul meets me; Saint  
Peter tells me it had been better 1 Pet. 2. 21  
I had not known the way of  
Righteousness, than after I have  
known, to turn from the Holy  
Commandement: It had been  
better I had not known, and yet  
then my condemnation had been  
most certain: do you not see  
evidently, that I have wilfully  
denied the known truth; I may  
justly expect not only damnation,  
but worse if worse may bee ima-  
gined. God will have me under-  
go the just punishment of my sin,  
and make me an example of his  
wrath for your sakes.

The

The company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life; so gravely and wisely dilating concerning the Judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzy or madnesse that had possessed him; and being as it were, in admiration of his estate, *Spira* proceeded on again in this manner: 'Take heed to your selves, it is no light or easie matter to bee a Christian; it is not Baptism, nor reading of the Scriptures, nor boasting of faith in Christ, (though even these are good) that can prove one to bee an absolute Christian: you know what I said before, there must bee a conformity in life; a Christian must bee strong, unconquerable, not carrying an

an obscure profession, but resolute, expressing the Image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition, to the last breath: hee must give all diligence, by Righteousnesse, and holinesse, to make his calling and election sure: many there are that snatch at the promises in the Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish and careless, and being flattered by the things of this present world, they passe in their course in quietnesse and security, as if they were the onely happy men; whom nevertheless the Lord in his Providence hath Ordained to eternal wrath; as you may see in Saint *Lukes* Rich *Luke 16.* man: Thus it was with mee,  
there

therefore take heed.

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which hee disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans choller, that hee charged him with Hipocrisie and Dissimulation, or Frenzie; to whom *Spira* gravely answering; said :

*You may interpret the matter as you will : but I am sure, I am not onely the Actor but the Argument and matter of the Tragedy; I would it were Frenzy either fained, or true, for if it were fained, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none: for I know that God hath pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his Majesty; I am a cast-away, a Vassal*

of wrath: yet dare you call it dis-  
sembling and frenzie; and can  
mock at the formidable example  
of the heavy Wrath of God, that  
should teach you fear and terror:  
But it is natural to the flesh, either  
out of malice or ignorance, to speak  
perversly of the works of God:  
The natural man discerneth not  
the things that are of God, be-  
cause they are spiritually discern'd.

How can this bee (saied Gri-  
bauldus) that you can thus ex-  
cellently discourse of the judg-  
ments of God, and of the gra-  
ces of his Holy Spirit, that you  
finde the want of them, and  
earnestly desire them; and yet  
you think you are utterly de-  
prived of them?

Take this for certain (saith he)  
I want the main grace of all, and  
that which is absolutely necessary;  
and God doth many times extort

E

most

most true and strange testimonies of his majesty, justice, and mercy; yea, out of the mouths of very reprobates: for even Judas, after he had betrayed his Master, was constrained to confess his sin, and to justify the innocency of Christ; and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter: God hath taken faith from me, and left me other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation: By how much the more I remember what I had, and hear others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down; professing that his pangs were such, as that the damned wights in Hell endure not the like misery; that his estate was  
worle



worse than that of *Cain* or *Fu-*  
*das*, and therefore hee desired  
to die. Yet behold (saith he) the  
Scriptures are accomplish'd in me;  
they shall desire to dye, and death  
shall fly from them: And verily,  
he seemed exceedingly to fear,  
least his life should bee drawn  
out to a longer thred: and  
finding no ease or rest, ever and  
anon, cried out, *O miserable*  
*wretch, O miserable wretch*: then  
turning to the Company,  
he besought them in this man-  
ner.

*O Brethren! take a diligent*  
*heed to your life, make more ac-*  
*count of the gifts of Gods Spirit*  
*than I have done, learn to beware*  
*by my misery, think not you are as-*  
*ured Christians, because you un-*  
*derstand something of the Gospel;*  
*take heed you grow not secure on*  
*that ground; be constant and im-*  
*moveable*

moveable in the maintenance of  
your profession: Confess even un-  
til death, if you be called thereto.  
He that loveth Father, Mother,  
Brothers, Sisters, Sons, Daughters,  
kindred, houses, lands, more than  
Christ, is not worthy of him.

Luke 9.62

These words (said they) did  
not sound like the words of  
a wicked Reprobate.

I do but herein immitate (saith  
Spira) the Rich Glutton in the  
Gospel, who although in Hell, yet was  
carefull that his Brethren should  
not come to that place of torment  
and I say to you Brethren, take  
heed of this miserable estate  
wherein I am.

Then turning himself to cer-  
tain young men that were pre-  
sent, he desired them to con-  
ceive him aright. I do not speak  
this to derogate from the certainty  
of saving faith, and the promise

of the Gospel, for they are most sure; but take heed of relying on that faith that works not a holy & unblameable life, worthy of a believer; credit me it will fail, I have tried it: I presumed I had gotten the right faith: I preached it to others, I had all places of Scripture in memory that might support it: I thought my self sure, and in the meantime living impiously, and carelessly; behold, now the judgments of God have overtaken me: not to correction, but to condemnation: And now you would have me to believe, but it will not be, for I felt too late, that good things belong only to such as are good, whose sins are covered with Christs death and blood, as with a vail, and guarded with his righteous merits from the flood of Gods wrath, even as with a mighty wall, least miserable mortals should be swallowed

up with greatnesse of their sins:  
But as for me, I have as it were  
wilfully with mine hands pulled  
down this Rampire, behind which  
I might have rested in safety; and  
now are the swelling waters come  
even to my soul, and I am cast  
away.

One of his familiar friends  
chanced to say, That certainly  
he was overcome with melan-  
cholly; which being over-  
heard, Spira answered.

Well, bee it so, seeing you will  
needs have it so; thus also is  
Gods wrath manifested against  
me, in that he hath taken from me  
the use of mine Understanding &  
Reason, so as I can neither rightly  
esteem and judge of my distemper  
nor hope of remedy: you see Bre-  
thren what a dangerous thing it  
is, to stop or stay in things that con-  
cern Gods Glory; especially to dis-  
semble

seemle upon any terms : What a fearful thing is it to be near and almost a Christian ? Never was the like example to this of mine ; and therefore if you bee wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from mee ; that it were with me now, as in times past, I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and Glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame, and my body consumed to Ashes.

You say you are desperate; O Spira (said they) why then do you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to do? Let me have a Sword (said Spira.) Why what would you do with

it (quoth they) *I cannot tell you (said hee) what this minde would move mee to upon occasion, nor what I would do.*

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse: For the avoiding of concourse of people; for every day seldom fewer then twenty continued with him, and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him; they consult to carry him back again into his own Countrey; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him: *Vergerius* amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him: *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed: For hee said *My heart is estranged*

estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred and Blasphemy against God: I finde I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot stop nor help my self: Your prayers for me shall turn to your own benefit, they can do mee no good.

Kergerius came to take his leave of him, whom Spira embracing, said: Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate; but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation: yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind office of love and good will; and the Lord return it unto you with a plentiful increase of all good.

The next day being brought down

down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which hee running hastily, snatched hold of, as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation hee said, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often saying that hee envied the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion, so spent, that hee appeared a perfect Anatomie: expressing to the view, nothing but



but sinews and bones: vehemently raging for drink: ever pining, yet fearful to live long: dreadful of Hell, yet covering death: in a continual torment, yet his own tormentour: and thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in Hell: hee represented an extraordinary example of the Justice and Power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few daies after his arrival at his own home, hee departed this present life: Yet an occasion to make us remember, *That secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.*

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